



SPIDER'S WEB

Acknowledgements

Spider's Web is inspired by shows like *Leverage* and *Charlie's Angels*, books like *Modesty Blaise*, and movies like *Mission Impossible*.

I'm aiming for serious and gritty but if you want camp, you go for it.

The design of *Spider's Web* was influenced by *Otherkind* dice, *My Life With Master*, the *Mythic Game Master Emulator*, and some design talk on /r/rpgdesign.

There will some day be a long list of playesters
here, hopefully.

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All resemblance to persons living or dead, is purely coincidental (or at worst, parody) and all that.

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Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Contents	ii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
2 Actual Play Example	2
3 How To Play	3
3.1 <i>The Mission</i>	3
3.2 <i>Scene Objective & Setting</i>	3
3.3 <i>Scene Challenge</i>	4
3.4 <i>Acts</i>	4
3.5 <i>Interpretation</i>	4
3.6 <i>Running a Scene</i>	5
3.7 <i>Failure</i>	8
3.8 <i>Success</i>	8
3.9 <i>New Agents</i>	8
4 Characters	9
4.1 <i>Spider</i>	9
4.2 <i>Agents</i>	10
4.3 <i>Agent Abilities</i>	11
5 Scripted Scenes	12
5.1 <i>Breaking Point Scenes</i>	12
5.2 <i>General Scenes</i>	12
6 Oracles	13
6.1 <i>General Oracle</i>	13
6.2 <i>Actor Oracle</i>	13
6.3 <i>Actor Color Chart</i>	13
6.4 <i>Actor Independence Chart</i>	13
6.5 <i>Complications Chart</i>	14
6.6 <i>Reasons Chart</i>	14
6.7 <i>Motive: Action</i>	14
6.8 <i>Motive: Intent</i>	14
6.9 <i>Motive: Target</i>	14
6.10 <i>Creating New Agents</i>	14
7 Making It Yours	15
7.1 <i>Supernatural Elements, Amoral Heroes, & Camp</i>	15
7.2 <i>Beyond Solo</i>	15

1 Introduction

Spider's Web is a solo, narrative, scene-based roleplaying game. In it, you take the role of Spider, a shadowy mastermind who manipulates three agents through spy missions, capers, and heists.

To play, you will need four sets of six-sided dice or an app roller and a good amount of patience and bookkeeping skills. You'll find it easiest to play if each set is a different color and you have at least six in each set. Paper and a pencil will be useful too.

Overview

Playing *Spider's Web* is a lot like playing any other solo in some ways; you narrate the scene and the events, adding color and asking an oracle for details, and then when it comes to a conflict between what you want and what the game's fiction says you can have easily or without consequences, you roll to see who is right.

EXAMPLE

XX EXAMPLE

But it's also very different, in that you are not playing one character, but four. The mastermind, directly, from the shadows, and three agents, indirectly, using charts and timers.

When you roll to see how a Conflict plays out, you roll to see which of your agents succeeds, is hurt, suffers a Complication, or just snaps under the stress.

Then you roll to see if they do as you ask, or if you'll need to manipulate them — and what the consequences for pulling their strings will be.

And you decide how far you'll go to succeed at the mission, and what you'll sacrifice to get there.

Principles

Follow the fiction; don't plan the world in advance.

Trust your instincts and sense of pacing.

Ignore nonsense. If a random result doesn't fit with the fiction, discard it.

2 Actual Play Example

XX ACTUAL PLAY EXAMPLE - ONE PAGE

3 How To Play

At the start of the game, print out pages 9 and 10; these are your character sheets.

Place a die for each Agent, set to their Idealism value, in their ACT square, then give each Agent a single die of their color.

Each game has a Mission Objective, and is played in three Acts, each with three Scenes. A Scene can be as long or short as you want, but each Scene consists of, at the minimum, a set-up, scene objective, and scene challenge.

The Mission

Your Spider wants this thing, the Mission Objective. For money, for love, for power, you decide why. Whatever it is, your Spider's willing to put people in danger for it — and people loyal to your Spider are willing to accept that risk.

Mission Objective

- 1 | Steal the biggest diamond in the world from a museum on the busiest day of the year.
- 2 | Recover a prototype weapon from a paranoid entrepreneur's penthouse apartment.
- 3 | Liberate a kidnapped scientist from an icy base in the Alps.
- 4 | Convince a wealthy businessman to flip on his criminal kingpin associate.
- 5 | Protect a nervous geek who accidentally stole vital intel until the extent of the damage is known.
- 6 | Be on the train when the hand-off happens and intercept the package.

Scene Objective & Setting

This is color; if you don't like the options presented, create your own.

Scene Objective

- 1 | Set up a long con to get dirt on someone who has what you need.
- 2 | The code you need is in a locked safe on the third floor of the mansion.
- 3 | Shake a few trees and see what falls out.
- 4 | It might not look like much, but the ex-Agent running it knows what you need.
- 5 | Plant evidence of an incriminating nature on a key asset to enforce cooperation.
- 6 | Get a backdoor in place on an assistant's cell so you can track it to the meeting.

Scene Setting

- 1 | The air ducts of a building that's full of people. Why're they here?
- 2 | A train rolling through snow-covered mountains. Where's it going?
- 3 | The executive offices of a prestigious law firm. What time is it?
- 4 | The roof, so far up people look like ants. What's the weather like?
- 5 | A quiet garden, sun-dappled and still. Who's hiding?
- 6 | A nightclub on a Friday night. What's the price of admission?

Scene Challenge

The Scene Challenge is the Conflict that resolves the Scene. The Scene Challenge should be the most dramatic and meaningful roll of the Scene and tie directly into the Scene Objective.

If you win the Scene Challenge, you win the Scene Objective. Narrate how and give your Spider one point of Weave.

If you lose, you still get the information you need to proceed, but you're in a worse position; start the next Scene with a randomly rolled Complication.

End the Scene shortly after and begin a new one.

Acts

If you finish Act 1 with more Challenge successes than failures, give each of your Agents a bonus die.

Do the same for Act 2. In Act 2, the stakes escalate; from now on every Conflict has an Element of Danger.

When you reach Act 3, you have one more Scene to build resources. After that, in Scene 8 or 9, the objective should be in reach!

Interpretation

Use all the information you have as color and substance for your narration. Low Loyalty? The Agent's still angry about Venice. High Savvy? That's someone who knows someone who's selling what Spider needs.

Only consult one of the Oracles when you can't read the answer from the numbers on the character sheets, the fiction as established, and the Conflict dice.

Remember to use all of the information the dice provide when you narrate the outcome of a Conflict. Play it fast and loose; if your Heavy's not in the same room as your Ghost, she can still hit the fire alarm or make a phone call or distract a target.

Take the dice results as an aggregate picture of the situation, not a blow by blow account of events. You can sum up an entire scene in one Conflict, if it makes sense to you, or draw it out a little if that seems more logical.

Don't be afraid to cover a lot of ground in narration. It's perfectly fine to run a Scene on a speeding train through the Alps, then start the next scene in the ducts over a diplomatic ball in the heart of a major city.

Running a Scene

First, establish the scene and which agents are present, and why. Establish the scene objective. Reset Agent Timers and be sure each Agent has at least one die in their color in their pool.

Narrate the scene, asking the **General Oracle** questions about world details as needed, and consulting the **Actor Oracle** or **Actor Color Chart** if one of your Agents should act but you're not sure how.

When your Agents face a Conflict, a point where they want something but there's risk, it's time to roll.

The four basic Elements of a Conflict are Objective, Danger, Complication, and Timer.

There are always three Elements in any Conflict, one of which must be the Objective. Choose the other two (and they might be the same type) based on which apply best to the current situation according to the established fiction.

Always consider Danger first.

When you add additional Elements to a Conflict over the standard three, give Spider a Weave point for each.

Don't worry about defining the specific nature of each Element yet.

Assemble a pool; collect one die of the appropriate color for each Agent present in the scene. If an Agent has more than one die in their pool, you may choose to use as many or few of the extras as you wish.

Roll, then assign the dice, one per Element. The agent whose color is assigned to an Element takes the impact of that result. On a 1, something goes wrong; make a Loyalty Test for that Agent, in addition to any other consequences of the roll.

If for some reason you don't have enough dice to fill out a Conflict's Aspects (for example, if an Agent is facing a Conflict alone), assume you have a pretend die set to 1 for each unassigned Aspect.

If pretend dice are in play, the Agent with the most real dice in the Conflict takes the brunt of all pretend die failures. If it's a tie who has the most real dice, you pick which one suffers, but this counts as a Betrayal and prompts a Betrayal Test.

Once you've assigned dice, narrate the outcome of the Conflict, using the Aspects, results, and consequences as part of your fiction.

Move one die back into the pool of any Agents who are out of dice. Discard the rest.

Objective

The objective is set by the scene and is always part of any roll.

Objective is win or lose. If you roll a 4+, you succeed, otherwise, you fail. The agent whose color is in this category is the linchpin for the success or failure of the Objective.

If the Agent fails, add an extra die of that color to the Agent's pool.

Complication

A Complication is a twist or unexpected change to the scene that happens immediately (or at least in the very near future).

Complications can be used when there's no real immediate Danger, or when a Timer doesn't seem to be needed.

A Complication is good on a 4+ and bad on a 3-. It happens primarily to the Agent whose color is spent, but might affect other Agents if they're in the splash zone.

EXAMPLE

XX COMPLICATION EXAMPLE

Danger

Use the Danger Aspect when something about the Conflict threatens the agent's well-being, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Subtract the Danger die from six and add the difference to the affected Agent's Trauma.

EXAMPLE

XX DANGER EXAMPLE

Timer

A Timer tracks future events, like bombs counting down or guards sweeping the area or the mastermind's countdown launch.

Use a Timer when there's something in the fiction that should be on a fuse, when it would be interesting to have something happen shortly but not right away, or just to push the action up a notch.

When you set a timer, put a die of the same color as the one you assigned to this Aspect, set to the number rolled on a Timer square, and jot down what it represents.

Each time you roll dice for any reason, reduce the timer by 1. When it reaches 0, the event comes to pass, affecting the Agent who owns the Timer die.

If what the Timer represents is averted with at least one turn remaining, put it back into the Agent's pool as a bonus die.

EXAMPLE

XX TIMER EXAMPLE

Loyalty Test

When an Agent's loyalty is in question, roll one of Spider's dice. If you roll under their current Loyalty, they do as you ask. If you roll over it, they do as they see fit; roll on the **Actor Independence Chart**.

You may invoke one of an Agent's Old Wounds to force the Agent to follow your instructions. Narrate how this works; are you calling in an old debt? Reminding them of a weakness? Exploiting it?

Each Old Wound can only be used once per game in this fashion, but when you use an Old Wound against an Agent, they lose one point of Loyalty.

If your Spider has an Old Wound, the Agent can hit back, costing you a point of Weave; roll on the **Actor Independence Chart** to see what they end up doing after.

EXAMPLE

XX LOYALTY TEST EXAMPLE

Betrayal Test

When an Agent has cause to feel betrayed by you, roll one of Spider's dice.

If you roll over their current Idealism but under their current Loyalty, they feel betrayed and angry; reduce their Loyalty and Idealism by one each; otherwise, choose one to reduce by one.

EXAMPLE

XX BETRAYAL TEST EXAMPLE

Failure

When you fail the Mission Objective, either because the fiction makes achieving it impossible or because you just don't have enough Agents or resources left to pull it off, stop the game.

Your Agents, any who've survived, scatter to the winds. Your Spider suffers a setback; add an Old Wound to Spider's character sheet.

Success

If you achieve the Mission Objective, you win.

Sure, you might have lost your best Agent and the other two hate your guts and are only willing to help you out because you know exactly how to push their buttons (and you're down to your last string to pull), but **you win**.

New Agents

If you're starting a new mission and have fewer than three active Agents, you have two options.

The first is to bring one of your previously downed Agents back into play. Spend two Weave points. One Agent of your choice returns, with a new Old Wound. Set their Loyalty and Idealism to the last known values, plus a d6 each.

The second is to bring in a new Agent. Create one modeled on one of the existing Agents or roll a new one up. If you succeeded on your last Mission, you get one new Agent for free; otherwise, spend two Weave to bring a new Agent into play.

4 Characters

Weave 6

TIMER

TIMER

TIMER

TIMER

TIMER

BONE WEAVER SPIDER

Spider runs the show from the shadows.

Start with Weave 6 plus however many Mission Objectives Spider has successfully completed, and that many dice.

It's up to you whether your Spider manipulates things beforehand or if your Spider's got a direct line to the Agents at all times, or a mix of the two, or something different.

That's color for your fiction; the mechanics are the same either way.

Manipulate

Spend one Weave to give an Agent one of your dice as a bonus die.

If you assign a Spider die to an Element, treat it as that Agent's success or failure, aided or hindered by Spider's information, manipulations, or forethought.

If an Agent fails or is injured on Spider's die, make a Betrayal Test.

Bond

Once per Agent per game, spend one Weave to trigger a Flashback Scene.

Scheme

Spend Weave to play dirty. Maybe you did something morally unsavory to stack the dice in your favor, or maybe you just ordered your Agent to, but the Target number goes down by one for one Element, for each point spent, until the end of the scene.

Make a Loyalty check for each Agent who benefits from the lower Target number, and reduce their Idealism by one.

TRAUMA

TRAUMA

TRAUMA

Savvy 4

Loyalty 3

ACT

Idealism 5

Skill 4

BLUE GHOST SMOKE

Special: Smoke can avert a Timer at 1 left or higher.

Choose one.

- Smoke saved your life once but lost a lover in the process. Loyalty +1, Old Wound (Lost Lover)
- Smoke belongs to no one. Loyalty -1, Idealism +1.
- You don't trust Smoke, but Smoke is the best you've got. Skill +2, Loyalty -1.

Savvy 2

Loyalty 4

ACT

Idealism 3

Skill 5

RED HACKER ECHO

Special: Echo can use Savvy a second time.

Choose one.

- Echo has a criminal past you promised to expunge and a bad case of homesickness. Loyalty +1, Old Wound (Homesick)
- Echo believes in your cause and trusts you to do the right thing. Loyalty +2, Idealism +2.
- There's nobody better, but Echo is too curious for safety. Skill +1, Savvy +2.

Savvy 2

Loyalty 4

ACT

Idealism 4

Skill 2

YELLOW HEAVY CUT

Special: Cut can swap the Trauma gauge for an Old Wound.

Choose one.

- You brought Cut out of a two-bit Mafia gutter and back into the game. Loyalty +1, Old Wound (Trick Knee)
- Cut has seen it all and doesn't believe in much anymore. Savvy +3, Idealism -1.
- There's an art to hitting, like Picasso or something, only with more screaming. Skill +2, Savvy +2.

Agent Abilities

Each Agent has six aspects; Loyalty, Idealism, Trauma, Savvy, and Skill.

Loyalty

Loyalty is a measure of the Agent's trust in you. It ensures that the Agent will follow your orders, but the higher the Loyalty, the harder they take betrayal.

Idealism

Idealism increases the chances your agent will distrust you if you do something shady.

The lower an Agent's Idealism, the more often they will act independently. When you begin play, set a Timer turned to the Agent's Idealism on the Agent's character sheet over the word "ACT".

When this Timer triggers, roll on the **Actor Independence Chart** and interpret the results as the Agent acting on their own.

Then reset the timer.

Trauma

Trauma measures how many wounds the Agent has taken.

The Trauma gauge is full when it reaches 6; if it goes any higher, the Agent is dying, captured, or compromised. Either way, they're out of the game permanently, unless you pull some strings.

Savvy & Skill

Savvy is a measure of how much the Agent knows about how people work, and how sophisticated they are when dealing with others.

Skill measures how good they are at their job.

Once per game each, swap out an Agent's die result on a Conflict roll for their Savvy or Skill value.

When you do this, narrate how Savvy or Skill affected the roll; make it part of the fiction.

Special Ability

Each Agent has a unique special ability, usable once per game.

5 Scripted Scenes

Breaking Point Scenes

If an agent's Idealism or Loyalty are at 1, a Breaking Point Scene is triggered if:

Trigger	Result
Agent gains Trauma	Bolt Scene
Agent suffers a negative Complication	Temptation Scene
Agent fails at an Objective	Hopeless Scene

Bolt

Narrate how the Agent is given the opportunity to flee the mission entirely, and make a Loyalty or Idealism check, whichever is higher. If you succeed, the Agent sticks around; add one to either Loyalty or Idealism, your choice.

Tempt

Narrate how the Agent is given the opportunity to indulge a vice or virtue that will take them out of the action for the rest of the mission.

Make a Loyalty or Idealism check, whichever is higher. If you succeed, the Agent turns down the temptation; add one to either Loyalty or Idealism, your choice.

Note that “turning down the temptation” doesn’t mean they don’t indulge; it just means that they don’t let it distract them from completing the mission.

Surrender

Narrate how the Agent has reached a point of hopelessness and is given the opportunity to surrender to it by refusing to pursue the mission any longer.

Make a Loyalty or Idealism check, whichever is higher. If you succeed, the Agent regains heart; add one to either Loyalty or Idealism, your choice.

General Scenes

Flashback

A flashback is an interrupt scene between an Agent and another major character, either an Agent or Spider. Other Actors might be present, or not, that’s up to you.

Narrate or play out the scene, then choose; one major player gets two bonus dice, the other none, or they each get one.

6 Oracles

General Oracle

Frame a question, then pick the outcome that you think is most likely to be correct. Roll all of Spider's dice.

If any two dice match, you predicted the outcome successfully. Take the face value of the matched dice and compare it to the **Complications Chart** to see if there's a twist.

Otherwise, go with the opposite outcome and use the lowest die showing as the value of the **Complication Chart**.

Actor Oracle

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The Agent acts to complete the mission in the best way possible. Add a +1 to one die in the next Conflict. |
| 2 | The Agent uses skill or experience to further the mission. Restore one use of Skill or Savvy. |
| 3 | The Agent relies on luck or a gamble to achieve the goal. Add a bonus die to their pool. |
| 4 | The Agent is distracted by a personal flaw or foible. Subtract 1 from one die in the next Conflict. |
| 5 | The Agent is distracted by an old experience. Add an Old Wound of your choice. |
| 6 | The Agent sees an opportunity to enrich themselves and takes it. Remove a bonus die from their pool. |

Actor Color Chart

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Agent makes a flippant remark. |
| 2 | The Agent shares a retirement dream or life goal. |
| 3 | The Agent is unkind or impatient with an ally. |
| 4 | The Agent mentions something from their (or Spider's) past. |
| 5 | The Agent expresses the reason they are here. |
| 6 | The Agent seriously questions their life choices. |

Actor Independence Chart

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Agent pursues the goal as expected. |
| 2 | The Agent freezes and does nothing. They don't contribute dice to the next Conflict in this Scene. |
| 3 | The Agent fights or is aggressive, provoking a new Conflict or adding a new Danger to the current one. Their die can only go to Danger. |
| 4 | The Agent flees, retreats, or otherwise attempts to escape. Don't use their dice on the next Conflict unless it's related to escaping. |
| 5 | The Agent loses a point of Loyalty; roll again on this chart, just once. |
| 6 | Betrayal; the Agent sabotages one of the other Agents. Narrate why and how, then initiate a Conflict for the sabotaged Agent; this one doesn't contribute any dice. |

Complications Chart

1	something breaks	4	gear windfall
2	someone notices and hinders	5	someone notices and helps
3	hindering factor comes to light	6	helpful factor comes to light

Reasons Chart

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Friendship	Resentment	Greed	Lust	Jealousy	Envy
2	Love	Hate	Loathing	Despair	Bitterness	Fear
3	Honor	Duty	Trust	Loyalty	Idealism	Naivete
4	Bravery	Remorse	Guilt	Desire	Obsession	Integrity
5	Revolusion	Weakness	Strength	Terror	Torture	Vanity
6	Selfishness	Judgement	Betrayal	Vengeance	Rage	Grief

Motive: Action

1	to possess
2	to consume
3	to destroy
4	to rescue
5	to impress
6	to secure

Motive: Intent

1	illicit
2	inappropriate
3	dangerous
4	pure
5	means to an end
6	to secure

Motive: Target

1-2	person
3-4	thing
5-6	place

Creating New Agents

Roll 2d6/2 for each stat. Roll or choose a Codename, Role, and Special ability. Setermine the three stat adjustment options and choose one.

Role

1	HITTER
2	FACE
3	THIEF
4	GRIFTER
5	BRAIN
6	TECH

Codename

1	HONEY
2	CYPHER
3	SLICE
4	FOX
5	CHASE
6	HARPER

Special Abilities

1	use Skill twice
2	give up a bonus die to give a point of Weave
3	turn anyone's Complication roll to a 6
4	turn anyone's Danger roll to a 6
5	take a free bonus die
6	move a Timer to someone else

For each adjustment, roll a d6. Read a 6 as a +2, 5-4 as a +1, 3-2 as a -1, and 1 as a -2.

- Adjust Loyalty, add an Old Wound.
- Adjust two gauges of your choice.
- Adjust Savvy and Skill.

7 Making It Yours

Supernatural Elements, Amoral Heroes, & Camp

Spider's Web is deliberately vague about the setting, characters, and genre of the game. This is deliberate, to leave as much room for you to discover the world — and to include elements that you enjoy — as possible.

Spider's Vampire Hunters

XX CHART FOR MINI CAMPAIGN

Spider's Villains

XX CHART FOR MINI CAMPAIGN

Spider's Angels

XX CHART FOR MINI CAMPAIGN

Beyond Solo

If you'd rather play as a group, divide the game into three types of "role"; Gamemaster, Spider, and Agent (traditional player).

In this case, Spider still has the abilities listed under Weave and can also directly order the Agents to do things, employing Loyalty Tests and Breaking Point Scenes as usual.

The Gamemaster assumes the responsibility for defining Scenes, adding color, creating Conflicts, and assigning Aspects.